(c) the steps being taken by Government to get those Indian soldiers released?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) As per information compiled on the basis of representations received from the family members of the missing defence personnel including representations from Missing Defence Peronnel Relatives Association, there appear to be 54 Indian defence personnel as prisoners of war in the custody of Pakistan authorities. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), which is the nodal Ministry on this issue, has been taking up this matter on several occasions with Pakistan at various levels, including that of Prime Minister. During his visit to Pakistan on 20-21 February, 1999, Prime Minister raised this issue with the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the two sides appointed a 2-member Committee at Ministerial level to examine humanitarian issues, including that of the missing POWs. The matter was also raised in the official level discussions held with Pakistan on March 5-6, 1999. The Pakistani side stated that there were no Indian POWs in its custody, but agreed to re-examine the matter afresh. The Government would continue to purposefully pursue this matter with Pakistan.

Tension in Kargil Sector

792. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total expenditure on accomplishment of the Kargil Operation;

(b) whether tension still prevails on this sector of the border; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action being taken to meet any eventuality?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The total expenditure incurred on the Kargil Operation is estimated at Rs. 1984.00 crores.

(b) and (c) Troops are deployed in the Kargil Sector along the Line of Control in a virtual eyeball to eyeball contact with Pakistan army. Pakistan continues to resort to unprovoked firing in this sector to inflict casualties on our troops and portray J&K as a flash point to

the international community. Our troops, deployed along the LOC, respond appropriately to any such firing by Pakistan.

Soldiers killed during Indo-Pak Wars

†793. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of soldiers killed, injured and rendered totally handicapped in each of the wars fought so far between India and Pakistan, separately; and

(b) the details of relief provided, from time to time, to the families of the deceased soldiers, the amount being given after the Kargil war, along with the details regarding Government's assurance to help the injured soliders of the previous wars as well?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) In respect of Kargil conflict, the casualty figures are as under:—

(i) Defence Services personnel killed	524
(ii) Defence Services personnel injured	1,363

Other information is being collected.

Statement

(b) Prior to August, 1993, there was no ex-gratia award. Government policy on payment of ex-gratia to the next of kin of battle casualties was introduced for the first time in October 1996 and ex-gratia of Rs. 1 lakh and Rs. 2 lakhs were paid to the families of service personnel killed during the period 20.8.1993 to 30.4.1995 and 1.5.1995 to 31.7.1997 respectively while performing their duties in encounter with or in an incident involving armed hostels, extremists, terrorists or other antisocial elements such as dacoits/smugglers and also for those killed in enemy action and border skirmishes. Consequent on the implementation of the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission, the ex-gratia amount was raised to Rs. 5 lakhs in cases of death occurring due to accidents in the course of performance of duties and in cases of death occurring in the course of performance of duty attributable to acts of violence by terrorists,

†Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.